25th Anniversary of the International Pollinator Initiative

Written statement of the European Commission

Twenty-five years ago, the International Pollinator Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators was created with a vital goal: to halt and reverse pollinator diversity loss. It was grounded in the recognition that pollinators make a foundational contribution to our food systems, ecosystems and societies. Indeed, to our very existence. In the years since, it has raised awareness globally of the importance of pollinators, and promoted essential, coordinated action to prevent their decline.

One significant outcome was the decision by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) to carry out the first global assessment of pollinators, pollination, and food production from 2014 to 2016.

In the European Union, the first EU Pollinators Initiative, adopted in 2018, owes much to the International Pollinator Initiative and the IPBES global assessment. However, the work didn't stop there. In 2023, the EU Pollinators initiative was strengthened and in August 2024, the Nature Restoration Regulation's pollinator target came into effect. By 2030, the EU Member States have to reverse the decline in pollinator populations and diversity. The EU Pollinator Monitoring Scheme is set to standardise monitoring methods for the four main pollinator groups: wild bees, hoverflies, butterflies, and moths. These are urgent, ambitious goals. Achieving them requires EU Member States to boost taxonomic capacity with EU support, invest in restoration measures, and engage stakeholders like farmers, citizens, local authorities, land-use planners.

Together with the other actions of the revised EU Pollinators Initiative, these measures will guide the EU and its Member States towards success, ready to share valuable knowledge and exchange best practices with the international community. Scientific advances are also supporting our efforts. For example, DNA and image recognition supported by AI can help us to identify thousands of pollinator species at the species level, giving us a clearer understanding of the task at hand.

Twenty-five years after the start of the first International Pollinator Initiative, the plan for the International Pollinator Initiative on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators (2018-2030) is now halfway complete. However, at a time when European pollinators – and indeed those around the world – are facing mounting risks and threats, we urgently need to maintain momentum and increase collective action to protect pollinators. A permanent Global Pollinator Platform would help to do exactly that. It would promote capacity building; support knowledge generation and exchange; and agree on activities at a global scale. Crucially, it would enhance the effective implementation of the International Pollinator Initiative, build on its legacy, and strengthen protection of this vital part of our world.